Chapter 10 “I did not panic” Summary

It is important to get students involved in history by allowing them to construct their own interpretation. When working with historical narratives the teachers should ask students questions to help connect students to books or primary sources and to provide purpose and focus. Questions that could be asked: In what ways might this story have been different had it been set in our time and place? How does the author help you understand what the characters are feeling?

In order to help the students write their own historical narratives, the teacher used primary sources such as photos, reports, records, newspapers, maps and journals. These were used together with questions prompted by the teacher to collect information of person or time. It was interesting that students came up with different interpretation using the same sources. In order to have good class discussion the teacher creates guidelines/rubric for students to follow. Having guidelines will allow for a productive positive learning environment where students can feel confident in sharing. Another effective strategy for helping students retain and organize information researched is to have them write a diary entry of what they have learned that day.

Lesson Plan

**About the Book: Steps to Freedom by** [**Dr. Susan Shafer**](http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/contributor/dr-susan-shafer)  
Written in first person and in dialect, the story is told from the point of view of a rag doll named Sally.

Miz Rachel and her daughter, Lindy, are enslaved on a Virginia plantation. Sally provides comfort to Lindy as the girl toils in the cotton fields and is whipped by the overseer. One night, Miz Rachel and Lindy escape, beginning the trip north to freedom along the Underground Railroad. At one safe house, Sally slips from Lindy's waist and is left alone. Some time later, a new girl named Willa hides in the house, finding the doll that she calls Belinda. Once again the rag doll provides comfort to a little girl.

This book of historical fiction includes an Author's Note explaining the history of the Underground Railroad.

**Set the Stage**  
Begin a discussion of the Underground Railroad, which functioned primarily from 1830-1861. Explain that it was a network of secret stops that helped the enslaved in the slave states escape to freedom. Provide multiple sources on the Underground Railroad. (Photos, diaries, newspapers,)Have students analyze the primary sources of time frame and pick a person, such as a slave or person who helped slaves escape. Document findings and use for connection facts to historical fiction book.

**Review**  
Lead a discussion of the book with these questions:  
• How did Sally provide comfort to Lindy, and then, to Willa?  
• Why do you think the author chose to tell Sally's story using dialect?  
• How is this book different from others you've read about the Underground Railroad?  
• How does the artwork contribute to your understanding of the events?

**Student Activity**

[Steps to Freedom WS](Steps%20to%20freedom%20WS.pdf)

Students use research and book to create a story set in the time of the Underground Railroad.

[Historical Fiction Story Rubric](Historical%20Fiction%20Rubric.pdf)

Chapter 10 Analyzing Students’ Historical Narratives Summary

Narratives provides students balance and the opportunity to approach history from a different point of view. It is important to introduce narratives with other sources and styles of writing to teach history and provide the most accurate accounts. Key concepts, interpretation, sequence of events and questioning. It is important that students familiarize with actual facts so they can distinguish between fact and fiction. Some historical fiction can be so compelling and engaging and not be accurate. Other strategies the teacher applied was allow students to work in groups or provided one on one with students having trouble. To help student connect to require assessment activity she asked students to “picture history” and use previous resources to create get more details. Teacher documents her assessments in a graphic organizer. She documents how the student analyzes the texts and resources and her personal observation.

Lesson Plan

### MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY

Escape North! The Story of Harriet Tubmanby Monica Kulling (Random House, 2000)

True North by Kathryn Lasky (Point Signature, 1998)

Nightjohn by Gary Paulsen (Laurel Leaf, 1995)

Chart paper

Computers with Internet access

### LESSON 1 (FIVE 45-MINUTE CLASS SESSIONS)

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| 1. | Begin the first session by asking students to brainstorm the criteria for historical fiction. Ask them to think about the historical novels they have read and give examples of the criteria from each one. Record their responses on a sheet of chart paper. |
| 2. | Once you have established the criteria for historical fiction with examples based on the novels students have read, transfer their responses onto a sheet of paper and make copies for all students to keep in their notes. |
| 3. | Then review characterization with your students. Explain to students that an author uses certain techniques to help a reader understand the characters in a story. Remind them that these techniques include description, dialogue, internal monologue (i.e., the character's thoughts and words), and action. |
| 4. | Tell students that they will be evaluating the way Monica Kulling uses characterization to help her readers learn about a famous person. |
| 5. | Begin the read-aloud of Escape North! The Story of Harriet Tubman. Encourage students to take notes about Tubman as you read to help them remember the characterization techniques that Kulling has used. |
| 6. | At some point during the reading, stop and ask students to respond to the following writing prompt: What is Harriet Tubman like so far? What beliefs or emotions make her behave the way she does? What techniques did the writer use to help you know this?   Tell students that they need to use specific evidence from the reading to support their responses. Provide 10 minutes for students to write their responses to this question. You should also prepare a response. |
| 7. | Model feedback by first sharing your response to the writing prompt and then asking students to share their responses. Use chart paper or an overhead transparency to record their feedback. (You may want to photocopy this class feedback for student reference later in the lesson.) |
| 8. | Ask students to consider all of their responses and select Tubman's most important character traits at this point in the reading and the techniques the writer uses best to relay them to the reader. |
| 9. | Continue reading the biography of Tubman. When finished, ask students to brainstorm all of the questions they have about slavery and the Underground Railroad. |
| 10. | Have students share their questions with the class, and encourage them to add any interesting questions they hear from their classmates to their own lists. |

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### LESSON 2 (FIFTEEN 45-MINUTE CLASS SESSIONS)

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| 1. | Gather students into groups of five students each. |
| 2. | Begin by sharing a brief description of the two novels that you have selected for the lesson. Ask each student to choose the novel that he or she would like to read. Once students have made their selections, break them into small groups for discussion. |
| 3. | Review the [Book Discussion Group Roles and Procedure](http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson864/discussion-roles.pdf). Review also the criteria for historical fiction that students generated during **Lesson 1**. Explain that students will be working together in their groups to use the novels they are reading to not only help them better understand the historical fiction genre and evaluate the writer's effectiveness but also to begin searching for the answers to their questions about slavery and the Underground Railroad. |
| 4. | Have students begin reading the novel they selected, and end the session by asking students to write down one idea or question from their reading that they would most like to discuss with their book discussion groups during the next session. This question can be about the writer's techniques, the genre of historical fiction, or the time period during which the novel is set. |
| 5. | Divide the next 14 class sessions into 2 blocks-20 minutes for in-class reading and 25 minutes for book group discussions. If book group discussions are lagging, you may offer students some of the [novel discussion questions](http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson864/discussion-ques.pdf)as conversation starters. |

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### LESSON 3 (FIVE 45-MINUTE CLASS SESSIONS DEPENDING ON COMPUTER ACCESS)

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| 1. | Begin this lesson with a discussion of [The Fugitive Slave Bill of 1850](http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=1483). Ask students to use what they already know from their readings to draw some conclusions about the effect this law might have had on the country. Have them write their conclusions on chart paper and post them around the room for later reference. |
| 2. | Assign students the character roles they will be assuming. Through their readings, students should have an understanding of the different roles assigned. Remind them that they can also view the character roles on the[Road to Freedom WebQuest](http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson864/road-freedom1.html) for clarification. |
| 3. | Have students work independently to complete the WebQuest. Tell them they should use the [Character Role: Graphic Organizer](http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson864/graphic-organizer.pdf) provided in the WebQuest to take notes and brainstorm the position of their character. Remind them that it is not only important to find the information, but also to consider how their character's perspective might influence the perception of the facts. For each fact that they record, they should also respond to the question in the third column, "How would your character feel about this fact?" If they are having difficulty with this part of the organizer, ask them to first consider if their character is for or against slavery. Then ask them to think about the way in which the character would react to the information they are reading.   Guide students back to the class findings posted on the chart paper. Have them use the information on the chart paper to consider the way in which their character might respond (e.g., angry, satisfied, scared, encouraged). Remind them that it is important to consider the way the characterwould feel, not their personal responses to the issues. |
| 4. | Once the Overview and Research portions of the WebQuest are complete (Steps 1 and 2), have students return to their book discussion groups to complete the [Character Motivation Brainstorming](http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson864/character-motivation.pdf) sheet. Ask students to think about what they learned through their reading and online research as they develop their characters. Have them complete the [Character Sketch Handout](http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson864/character-sketch.pdf) for homework. This completes Step 3 of the WebQuest activity. |

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### LESSON 4 (FIVE 45-MINUTE CLASS PERIODS AND WORK AT HOME)

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| 1. | Once students have completed Steps 1 through 3 of the WebQuest, guide them to begin Step 4 by clicking on the writing scenario for their assigned character within the [Road to Freedom WebQuest](http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson864/road-freedom1.html). |
| 2. | Using the scenario provided and the [Character Sketch](http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson864/character-sketch.pdf) that they completed in Lesson 3, students will write a brief piece of historical fiction that focuses on their character in the given situation. |
| 3. | Remind students to also refer to the [Road to Freedom WebQuest Rubric](http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson864/rubric.pdf) to find the required writing objectives. These objectives include using sensory details to create a definite mood, incorporating information from their previous online research (see the [Character Role: Graphic Organizer](http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson864/graphic-organizer.pdf)), and including the required elements of fiction in their writing (i.e., conflict, setting, plot). Students will also be evaluated on their ability to work in a group. |
| 4. | End the lesson with a brief discussion of the activity. Ask students to respond to the following questions.   * What did you learn about slavery and this time period through your readings and research? * What were some of the primary conflicts of this period? * What historical information did you incorporate directly into your story segment? * How did the research help you to develop your story ideas? * What did you find most difficult about the research process? * How did brainstorming the ideas with a group impact your writing process? |
| 5. | You may also have student volunteers read samples of their work. |